

DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

Brown
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FILE: B-196532

DATE: July 7, 1980

MATTER OF: *Request for* Raymond C. Martin - Reimbursement for transportation of household goods

DIGEST: Employee who moved his household goods upon transfer and was reimbursed only his actual out-of-pocket expenses claims difference between his expenses and cost of move by Government bill of lading. Agency incorrectly reimbursed employee only his actual expenses, and since employee was authorized to move himself and the Government did not move his goods, the employee is entitled to reimbursement under the commuted rate system. See Matter of William K. Mullinax, B-181156, November 19, 1974.

By a letter dated October 17, 1979, Ms. Elsie R. Jasman, an authorized certifying officer with the Mid-Pacific Regional Office of the Bureau of Reclamation, United States Department of the Interior, requested an advance decision on the claim of Mr. Raymond C. Martin for shipment of his household goods.

The record shows that on May 21, 1979, the Department of the Interior issued a travel authorization to Mr. Martin for a permanent change of duty station from Willows, California, to Fresno, California. He was authorized transportation of household goods on an actual expenses basis via a Government bill of lading (GBL). On June 12, 1979, the travel authorization was amended to permit the employee to move himself. In so authorizing the amendment purported to limit the employee's reimbursement to the amount the move would have cost on an actual expense basis using a GBL.

On June 18, 1979, the employee moved and was subsequently reimbursed the actual out-of-pocket expenses he incurred in the move. On August 15, 1979, the employee requested that he be paid the difference between his actual expenses and the cost of a move by GBL. The certifying officer inquires whether this

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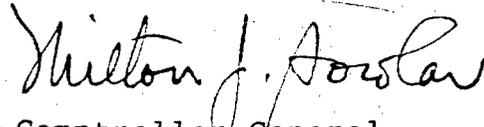
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may be done noting the inequity that would exist between an employee who is authorized reimbursement only of his actual expenses and an employee who uses the commuted rate system.

At the outset we note that the weight of the employee's household effects is not at issue here. We further note that the agency was incorrect in reimbursing the employee on an actual expense basis. The agency apparently believed that the amendment to the travel authorization permitting the employee to move himself did not affect its original determination that he be reimbursed on an actual expense basis. However, we held in Matter of William K. Mullinax, B-181156, November 19, 1974, that there is "no lawful authority for reimbursement to an employee on an 'actual expense' basis unless his agency has both authorized and shipped his effects on a GBL. * * * Where household goods are not shipped on a GBL, the commuted rate basis necessarily is for application to preserve the employee's rights under 5 U.S.C. 5724(a)(2)* * *."

Accordingly, Mr. Martin's entitlement should be determined under the commuted rate system and reimbursement made on that basis, if otherwise proper.



Acting Comptroller General
of the United States